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ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 13-22 January 1998

DRAFT REPORT

Note:
The draft report will be issiued in four sections:

Plenary meetings:	E/CONF.91/L.68
Meetings of Committee I:	E/CONF.91/L.68/Add.1
Meetings of Committee II:	E/CONF.91/L.68/Add.2
Meetings of Committee III:	E/CONF.91/L.68/Add.3

98-01203

c. Committee II: technical programmes

Toponymic data files (item 6)

Data collection procedures (item 6(a))

92. Austria submitted a paper (E/CONF.91/INF/20) dealing with lists of catchment areas of Austrian rivers, rivulets, and lakes. The particular example shown in this paper is the catchment area of the River Drau. It constitutes one volume in a series. These projects are supported with the aid of electronic data processing, i.e., by means of personal computers. Names collection is based on the Austrian Map 1:50,000 scale. Additional names not contained in this map series were acquired by correspondence with local communes.

Data elements required (item 6(b))

93. Slovakia announced the creation of a computer-aided database of geographical names (E/CONF.91/L.18), based on 1:10,000 scale map series. This database is populated with names of populated places, administrative units, natural features, such as hills, valleys, mountain ranges, and streams. Each database entry contains the following elements: name and code of a county, name and code of a district, name and code of a municipality, name and code of a cadastral area, the standardized name along with the date it was standardized, the previously standardized name form along with the time span of its validity, the feature designation code, the map sheet identification, orographic unit classification and its code, watershed classification and its code, additional data (spot elevation), and geographical

coordinates. The database is updated regularly and thus far about 30% of all districts have been covered.

94. Canada introduced a paper (E/CONF.91/L.34) delineating feature classes for geographic names records for that country's federally maintained database. For the establishment of that database, numeric codes and tables were used to specify the types of features being recorded. Over 800 distinct codes were compiled. These codes could be grouped into larger categories. This grouping of features was finalized with the production of the Concise Gazetteer of Canada, access to names records on the World Wide Web, and the sale of digital toponymic data. As a result, there are now 38 categories and associated codes used nationally for the primary breakdown of names records. It was further elaborated that the distinction between the terms city, town, and village varied from province to province, depending either on population figure or administrative structure.

95. Poland reported (E/CONF.91/L.55) that work on the establishment of a database of geographical names was begun in 1995. The main effort consists of names collection which is based on the 1:10,000 scale topographic map series published by the State Geodetic and Cartographic Service. The second phase of the work consists of verifying this names data by comparing it with lists of official names. The following elements are displayed in the database: Name, possessive case suffix, colloquial name, type of geographic object, name status, and source from which the spelling is derived. The type of object

category comprises localities and physiographic objects. It is planned to further detail localities by adding type, population, statistical code (assignment to administrative unit) and location. Physiographic objects will be further specified by adding type (some 40 categories), territorial identification and location. Thus far 72,000 names have been entered into the database.

Toponymic data transfer standards and formats (item 6 (c))

96. The delegate of the United Kingdom presented the report of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Exchange Formats and Standards (E/CONF.91/CRP.11). The primary task of the group was to investigate and recommend the requirements, standards, and formats which are available for the encoding, processing, international exchange and promotion of nationally standardized geographical names for international use. The report is subdivided into four annexes. Annex A contains a master list of characters in two parts: the first part is sorted alphabetically and by diacritic mark; the second part is sorted by ISO/Unicode code order. Annex B, Part I is made up of the principal languages, writing systems, and romanization systems for each country. Annex B, Part 2, provides the tables of characters for basic Roman and each of the extended Roman-alphabet character sets. From these tables the completeness of the 8-bit and 16-bit standards to meet the requirements for encoding digital geographical names can be readily assessed. Annex C constitutes the recommendations on a proposed toponymic data exchange

standard. Annex D contains a summary statement on the Unicode Standard, Version 2.0

97. The Working Group reached six conclusions and made five specific recommendations. It is planned to submit the data in this report to the Unicode Consortium. Answers were provided to questions from various delegations regarding the time frame for actual use of the draft encoding standards on both hardware and software platforms and the revision of some of the language tables (e.g., Saami).

Automated data processing (ADP) systems (item 6(d))

98. Japan introduced a paper (E/CONF.91/INF/5) describing the function of the Geographical Survey Institute. It gathers names information for the entire country and transfers the data into database format according to spellings in hiragana, katakana, and kanji. This order is fixed in the database for all names. In addition to the name, administrative names and codes and the corresponding map series are also entered. The Institute has also prepared the National Geographic Names Gazetteer in 1997.

99. Russia described the forthcoming development of its National Catalogue of Geographic Names (E/CONF.91/CRP.27). It is geared to collection, storage, updating and processing of geographic names data. The national topographic map series at 1:100,000 is said to be taken as the base. The automated toponymic file will comprise 2.5 - 3 million names. The report contains a list of desiderata for the National Catalogue to meet production requirements.

100. Canada introduced a paper (E/CONF.91/L.33) on the Canadian Geographical Names Data Base (CGNDB) which contains a half million names records, two-thirds of which had been approved by the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN). A brief description of the 24 data fields is included. They provide primarily: locational information, map sheet information, and status of a name. It was pointed out that recent improvements in coordinate precision and increased map information had been made.

National gazetteers (item 6(f))

101. Mozambique submitted a paper (E/CONF.91/L.1) on its new publication "Geographical Names of Mozambique, 1997" with three sample pages attached.

102. Germany reported (E/CONF.91/L.27) that its digital geographical names database had been expanded with names derived from the Joint Operations Graphic (JOG) 1:250,000 - scale map series. This database contains the following elements: name, statistical key number, coordinates, elevation, areal extension, population, feature code, and reference to map sheet number. This data set is available on diskette.

103. Canada submitted a paper on the Concise Gazetteer of Canada, 1997 (E/CONF.91/L.41). It was that first time that such a volume had been produced, containing some 47,000 approved names. The paper provides the following: Table of contents, Name selection criteria, User instructions, and a sample page. The representative of the United Kingdom expressed his appreciation

for this gazetteer.

104. Latvia reported on place name dictionaries of Latvia (E/CONF.91/L.47). The paper outlined historical stages of issuance of dictionaries in Latvia from the 17th century to the present. A toponymic dictionary "Place Names of Latvia" (1922-25), was the first dictionary of Latvian place names, mostly names of populated places. Three dictionaries of hydronyms were published between 1984 and 1994. Base mapping was started in 1993 with 130 sheets produced thus far (800-1,500 names per sheet). The aim is the establishment of a national digital database. To this end, Latvia intends to compile normative state toponymic dictionaries as well as regional and local toponymic dictionaries.

105. Germany presented a paper (E/CONF.91/L.28) on its "Concise Gazetteer of Germany". It consists of an alphabetically ordered names listing and a systematically ordered part showing the following feature classes: populated places, hydrographic features, mountains, regions and islands. Sorbian names are included as variants. It was stated that Sorbs reside in the states of Brandenburg and Saxony and that each affords Sorbian names a different treatment. In Saxony it was decided that the Sorbian name follows the official name separated by a slash (but in the same typeface), whereas in Brandenburg it is left to the communes to decide whether the Sorbian name is part of the official name.

106. The United States of America submitted a paper

(E/CONF.91/INF/14) on the "Digital Gazetteer of the United States of America". Available since 1993, each successive version since then had shown an increase in the amount of names. This gazetteer provides for downloading, for example, of individual state gazetteers, the Concise Gazetteer of the United States of America, and a file of features that no longer exist. It was also pointed out that a digital gazetteer is outdated soon after its release and that the Internet World Wide Web is more dynamic and up-to-date since the data is refreshed weekly. The fourth version of this gazetteer is slated for early 1998, and will include a separate section of geographical names in Antarctica.

107. Italy reported (E/CONF.91/CRP.36) that a national digital gazetteer had been completed in 1997. It contains approximately 750,000 names, derived from the 1:25,000-scale official map series. Data elements are as follows: feature name (including the name from another language besides Italian), coordinates rendered in the Gauss-Boaga system, and the Feature Attribute Catalogue Code, describing the properties of the feature. The gazetteer is also available on the Internet World Wide Web.

Other publications (item 6(g))

108. A paper (E/CONF.91/L.21) listing the eight provinces and 79 districts as of 1996 was submitted by Slovakia.

109. The United States of America submitted a paper (E/CONF.91/L.23) to describe the U.S. Board on Geographic Names gazetteer programme of foreign areas, since the Sixth Conference.

110. A list of new editions of gazetteers was included. In

addition, it was mentioned that fifteen issues of the Foreign Names Information Bulletin have appeared to date. A new edition of the BGN's Publications Catalog is expected next year. Also mentioned were the publication Romanization Systems and Roman-script Spelling Conventions (1994), a new version of the interim compact disk covering foreign areas (1998), and access to the U.S. BGN database of foreign geographical names via the Internet World Wide Web.

111. A paper submitted by Canada (E/CONF.91/L.36) described the multimedia CD-ROM "Noms et Lieux du Québec, 1997", produced by the Commission de toponymie du Québec. This product is not a gazetteer but has rather been based on the illustrated dictionary Noms et lieux du Québec, published in 1994. It contains the origin of about 6,000 place names. Multiple search criteria can be utilized to create names lists. The CD-ROM is compatible with either an Apple Macintosh or an IBM Windows environment.

112. The United States of America presented a paper (E/CONF.91/INF/15) regarding the U.S. Board on Geographic Names Publications Catalog. It features the various publications issued by the BGN. Each publication is listed with a brief description, either individually or by series.

113. Greece reported on the administrative divisions of that country (E/CONF.91/CRP.28). Greece is divided into 13 regions which in turn are further subdivided into departments, provinces, municipalities, and communes. In the paper, the names of the regions, departments, provinces and municipalities appear in both

Greek and Roman scripts.

114. The report (E/CONF.91/CRP.29), "Introduction à la notion d'espace et limite contenue dans un nom de lieu", was filed with the Conference but was not presented.

Terminology in the standardization of geographical names (item 7)

115. The report (E/CONF.91/CRP.29), "Introduction à la notion d'espace et limite contenue dans un nom de lieu, was filed

116. Israel submitted the report of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology for the period 1992-1997 (E/CONF.91/L.9) and presented the new version (4) of the Glossary of Toponymic Terminology (E/CONF.91/L.13). The representative of Israel regretted that translations of the glossary into Arabic and Russian were still lacking. Translations into the other three official languages of the United Nations had been accomplished. He suggested that all five translations be brought up to Version 4.

117. The representative of France stated that the French translation had already been updated to that effect. A further proposal was made, namely that the same volunteers who performed the translations before do so again to update the glossary to Version 4. The representative of Israel remarked that additions, deletions and other changes agreed upon at the 18th Session of the UNGEGN had been included in Version 4. He also stated that the uniform numbering system of version 4 needs to be applied to all translations so that they can be compared.

118. The representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea stated that Hangŭl is not the name of the Korean script in his country. The representative of Israel suggested deletion of that term from entries 284 and 294, with which the representative of the Republic of Korea also agreed. New terms suggested for inclusion were "microtoponym" and "synonym". The latter term is already included in Version 4 of the Glossary. The representative of Algeria proposed the term "ethnonym" for inclusion and provided the following definition from the French language Version of the Glossary: "Un ethononyme est un nom de personne ou de groupement de personnes utilisé dans la désignation des lieux" ("An ethnonym is the name of a person, or group of persons, used in the name of a place".)

119. Slovakia introduced a paper (E/CONF.91/L.19) which demonstrated convincingly that diacritics are just as significant as the basic letters of any orthography. This was demonstrated by pairs of geographical names in Slovakia where the presence or absence of a diacritic mark may cause a different phonemic manifestation and, therefore, a different meaning of a word. The paper favours a reaffirmation of Resolution 10 from the First United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which is viewed to be at variance with Resolution 19 from the Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. The representative of Israel, as editor of the Glossary, remarked that in Version 4 of the Glossary, presented to the Seventh Conference, the terms "diacritic" (no.

064) and "exonym" (no. 081) have indeed been amended accordingly. The representative of Slovakia thanked the representative of Israel for leading the work on the Glossary.